



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

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DIRECTOR

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**DATE:** April 20, 2021

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors

**FROM:** Elizabeth Hertel, Director *EH*

**SUBJECT:** Michigan Department of Human and Human Services  
Antigen Testing

On January 8, 2021, the state of Michigan announced a goal for all pre-K-12 school districts to offer an in-person learning option for students by March 1, 2021. Schools that follow existing guidance carefully and diligently are not considered major risks for outbreaks.

COVID-19 testing is not a requirement for schools to return to in-person learning. However, testing is one of many tools that, together, can be used to allow for safe in-person instruction. To support schools that incorporate COVID-19 testing into their plans to continue in-person learning, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is offering rapid antigen testing to pre-K-12 schools.

The state of Michigan also released its Guidelines for Operating Schools Safely, which summarizes guidance for schools across a range of topics that are relevant to in-person school operations. Along with other mitigation practices, like mask use, social distancing, and frequent cleaning, the guidelines outline how testing for SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can be used as part of a comprehensive strategy to safely return students and staff to in-person learning.

Given the increase of COVID-19 cases in younger Michiganders and outbreaks in pre-K-12 settings, MDHHS recommends that schools implement a school testing program to reduce the spread of COVID-19. To support schools that wish to incorporate SARS-COV-2 testing into their plans, **MDHHS is offering a voluntary program to provide rapid antigen testing to educators and staff in pre-K-12 schools.** The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services will distribute rapid antigen test kits to any pre-K-12 school in Michigan free of charge through the MI Safe Schools COVID Testing Program. **Recent improvements to the program include a streamlined reporting function to report individual-level data only for positive antigen tests to keep administrative workload low.**

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The latest epidemic order requires all individuals ages 13 through 19 who are participating in contact and non-contact athletic activities in the state of Michigan to test for SARS-CoV-2 on a weekly basis. Individuals who participate in contact sports that are officially deemed unsafe to play while masked must test for SARS-CoV-2 before any unmasked activity, up to three times weekly. Many outbreaks in pre-K-12 settings have been associated with youth sports. Between January and March, Michigan documented 291 outbreaks associated with youth sports teams, both contact and non-contact sports, that involved at least 1,091 people. Testing for all youth athletes ages 13-19 years old applies to both school-sponsored and non-school sponsored athletic activities, such as club sports. Organizers of club sports can enroll in the [MI Safer Sports Testing Program](#) for guidance, support, and rapid antigen testing supplies at no cost to the sports organizer.

Thank you for your consideration of the antigen testing program for your school or school district. If you have additional questions regarding the antigen testing program or other aspect of this communication, please reach out to your local health department.

EH:mg

c: Michigan Education Alliance  
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors